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## COUNTRY AND TOWN ACQUAINTANCES.

THE exact balance of favours in ordinary acquaintanceship is a matter very difficult to be adjusted. Sometimes people think they are giving more entertainments than they get, and on other occasions you would suppose that they are mortally offended at their friends for not coming oftener to eat of their meat and drink of their cup. It is hard to say whether a desire of reserving or of squandering victuals predominates; for though one would argue that it is more natural to keep what one has than to give it away for nothing, yet, to judge by the common talk of the world, you are far more likely to give offence by coming too seldom than by coming too often to the tables of your friends. From this cause, I have often been amused to hear people, about whose company I was not very solicitous, making the most abject apologies for having visited me so seldom of late, but promising to behave a great deal better for the future—that is to say, to give me henceforward much more of what I never desired before, even in the smallest portions.

But this kindness of language is not confined to the party threatening a visit; the party threatened is also given to use equally sweet terms of discourse. "Really, you have been a great stranger lately. We thought we never were to see you again. What is there to hinder you of an evening to come over and chat a little, or take a hand with the Doctor and Eliza at whist? We are always so happy to see you. I assure you we are resolved to take it very ill, and if you don't repay our last visit we will never see you again." With an equally amiable sincerity, the shocking person with whom you have been long quite tired, (having ceased to gain any amusement or any eclat from the acquaintance,) replies, "I must confess I have been very remiss. Indeed, I was so ashamed of not having called upon you for such a length of time, that I could not venture to do it. But, now that the ice is broken, I really will come some night soon. You may depend upon it." And so the two part off their several ways, the one surprised at having been betrayed into so many expressions of kindness towards an individual about whom he or she is quite indifferent, and the other, either benevolently resolving, in the simplicity of his heart, to pay the promised visit, or as much surprised at having been brought into circumstances where he was reduced to make such a promise,—which, however, as he is sure to forget it in a few minutes, is a matter of very little moment. If these, however, be the puzzlements which beset a town acquaintanceship, ten times more difficult is it to adjust the mutual rights and balance of advantages appertaining to one in which the one party is of the town and the other of the country. In most such cases, either the one party or the other has great and real cause of complaint. For example, a citizen of tolerable style, who has been confined to some laborious employment all the year round, amidst gas light within doors, and a foggy and smoky atmosphere without, with what delight does he throw himself into the country some fine sunny day in September, for the purpose of paying a long promised visit of three days to a country friend! He is received with boundless hospitality. The best bed-room, situated in that part of the house where you generally find a city drawing-room, is aired and provided in the most agreeable manner for his accommodation. The good-man rides about with him all day, and dines and drinks with him all night, except during those intervals when a lady or her daughters solace him with tunes on the piano, learned many years ago at a boarding school in town. The whole house, in fact, from the worthy agriculturist in chief to the chicken that has latest chipped in the barn-yard, are at his service, and he drinks in health, and rapture, and a taste for natural objects,

every hour. The three days are imperceptibly elongated to as many weeks, till at last he has become just like one of the family, calls the lady good-wife, and the daughters by their abbreviated Christian names, and is a very brother and more to his excellent entertainer. At length, replenished with as much health as will serve him through a whole twelvemonth of city life, rosy in cheek and in gill, sturdy as a pine on the hills, and thickened immensely about the centre of his person, he finds it necessary to take his leave. The whole of the worthy ruralists gather about him, and, as if not satisfied with what they have already done for him while he was in their presence, load him with other acts of kindness, the effect of which is only to be experienced on the way, or after he has reached his own home. If he could carry a ewe cheese on each side, like the bottles of John Gilpin, they would have no objection to give them. In fact, there is no bound to the kindness, the sincere heartfelt kindness, of these people, except his capacity or willingness to receive. Of course, he feels all this most warmly for the time; and while the impression is strong upon him, he counter-invites right and left. The goodman is never to be a day in town without coming take pot-luck. The ladies are to come in next winter, on purpose, and have a month of the amusements of the town, residing in his house. Any of their friends whatsoever, even unto the fourth generation, or no generation at all, he will be delighted to see, whenever they are in the city. He throws himself, his bosom, his house—all, open to them. But what is the real result of all this? He goes back to town, and resumes the serious labours of his profession. The roses fade from his cheeks, and gratitude from his heart. Some day, when he is up to the ears in a mysterious green box, like a pig in his trough, or a pullet in a well; or perhaps some day as he is rushing swiftly along the streets, intent upon some piece of important business, his city eyes awake upon a vision of the country, in the shape of that very friend who so lately was rendering him so many acts of kindness. The case is felt at once to be a scrape;—however, he must make the best of it. With almost breathless apprehension, he asks Agricola what stay he is going to make in town. What joy!—he goes within an hour to Falkirk tryste! But, ah! this is but a short relief. He comes back the day after to-morrow, and can then spend a day. Well, a day it must be: it is all settled in a moment; and, three minutes after having entered the house, Agricola finds himself shaken by the hand out at the door, which is closed behind him ere he can well believe that he has as yet seen his city friend. He walks a little way in a confused state of mind, hardly able to say distinctly that he is himself, or that his late guest is the identical good fellow he seemed to be three months ago. The whole appears a dream, and he thinks it must be hours since he entered the house, though it is only minutes. Falkirk tryste over, he comes back, and, at the appointed hour, attends his city acquaintance, who meanwhile, having consulted with his spouse, has taken the opportunity, since there was to be a dinner at any rate, to invite all the stiff people he knows, in order to pay off his old debts. The honest agriculturist gets a place among the rest, perhaps a good one, but in such a scene he finds no entertainment, and hardly gets a word of conversation with his friend during the whole evening. At the proper hour, he rises to take his leave among the rest. The host enquires when he leaves town—this is always a leading question for a country friend—hears, to his unspeakable comfort, that it is to be by the morning coach—and so good-night. Of course, after this, there is little inducement for Agricola to send his daughters to spend a month in the house of his city friend. The girls, however, do come in somehow or other, and are living with some other person on a visit, when one day, walking along the most crowded and fashionable street, they meet Urbanus arm in arm with his wife.

Seeing that they have first perceived *him*, he runs forward in the kindest manner, and, after introducing them to his partner, inquires after every particular individual left at home. Some miscellaneous talk ensues, and then, just at the skirts of the conversation, when they are hovering on the point of separation, he throws in—"You will be sure to see us some evening before you leave town." And then—and then there is no more about it.

A varied case often occurs as follows:—A young lady of perfect accomplishments, though of the middle ranks of life, happens to be particularly convenient to a neighbouring family of gentry in the country, where she is constantly invited by them, and becomes the bosom friend of all the young ladies, but only because her accomplishments are useful to them as a means of spending their time. But this acquaintance, though of use in the country, and there felt as involving no risk of dignity, becomes inconvenient when the parties happen to meet in town. The high-born demoiselle, who elsewhere would have rushed into the arms of her humble, but ingenious friend, now tamely shakes her hand, and, with cold complaisance, addresses her thus: "Mamma is keeping no company this winter, but I dare say she would be glad to see you some evening to tea; and—good morning." Such is the world!

## SUNSET.

I.

How beautiful the evening beams are falling on the sea.  
Where many a white sail pleasantly is moving up and down;  
There is not a cloud the sun to shroud, the sky from speck is free,  
And as on a painted landscape sleep forest, tower, and town.  
So freshly fair, and everywhere, the features of the scene,  
That earth appears a resting-place, where angels might alight;  
As if sorrow ne'er a visitant in human breast had been,  
And the verdure of the summer months had never suffered blight.

II.

Now sinks the sun—a twilight haze enwraps the sea and shore—  
The small waves murmur on the beach, as 'twere a dirge for day  
The blackbird, from yon poplar green, its ditty warbles o'er,  
And the evening star peeps south afar above the hills of grey.  
In the glory of the sunset glow, my thoughts abroad had flown,  
I only saw the landscape, in its splendid hues array'd,  
But the dreams of long-lost pleasures, and of friends for ever gone  
Came to me with the pensive hour of loneliness and shade.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLAND.

THE militia of the counties, the London police, village constables, and Mr. Macadam, have among them contrived to destroy all the romance of travelling—so that the most adventure-loving knight errant who wanders forth in search of the picturesque, may now journey from John o' Groat's to the Land's End in Cornwall, without ever meeting with a single incident worthy of noting down in his memorandum book—unless perchance the coach wherein he travels be overturned, a horse fall lame, or mine host of the roadside, contrary to his wont on such occasions, serve up a bottle of bad old Port. No making of wills before setting out on a long journey is now necessary; no unexpected pitfalls or quagmires now bisect the road; no postillions now league together with rascally innkeepers and robbers; no gallantly horsed highwaymen, ready booted and spurred, with faces covered with black crape, now leap the hedge to demand, as they politely cock their pistols, "your money or your life." The age of such doughty deeds has veritably passed away; and in travelling in merry old England, you may now either dose, conscious of security, in one corner of your carriage; or look wistfully out of the window, and watch houses, fields, trees, cottages, hedges, and ditches, whirl behind you, while thoughts, some bright with joy, others overcast with sadness, flit like shadows across your brain. Reader, it is the well known fashion

of this country to pass a certain number of the summer or autumn months away from the din of cities—"the buzz—the hum—the shock of men;" some retire from Edinburgh—splendid city as it is—to Portobello or Newhaven, or prefer the lovely neighbourhood of Aberdeen, or the classical old city of St. Andrews; others betake themselves to the Western Islands, or ramble as far as Inverness; but we, unencumbered by wife or weans, taking advantage of these peaceable times, propose proceeding direct to England, by the intellectual safety coach, lately started under the title of CHAMBERS' EDINBURGH JOURNAL, which travels with the most unexampled rapidity through all parts of the United Kingdom.

Hail to thee, fellow traveller!—'tis now noon—the sun shines warm and bright—it is the month of August, and we have already proceeded far on our road to England; not indeed to take up our abode in that wilderness of dust and brick houses—London; not to sojourn in any crowded manufacturing town, where all is hurry, bustle, and confusion, and the voice of human nature is hushed amidst the hum of money seeking, money gaining, money spending denizens: let us rather proceed to some quiet inland village, where youth and age are alike uncontaminated by those artificial habits, which, begotten of luxury and vice, hold always despotic dominion in large and populous cities. Man-kind, it would seem, cannot congregate in large masses, without becoming sophisticated and addicted to those follies and vices which undermine human happiness, and fall like a withering blight on the human mind: we, therefore, shall proceed, as 'tis our fancy, to some sequestered retreat, nor shall we, like other travellers, care to gain admission into those circles of gaiety and fashion, where "pale faced beauty holds her languid court," and is too often, amidst the dignity of rank and pomp of riches, "girt with the silent crimes of capitals." But where are we? The black, granitic heathery hills of old Scotland have receded; the rough irregular stone walls that lined the road on either side have given place to luxuriant hedges; the uplands and pasture fields are clothed with a softer and richer green than aught we have heretofore witnessed; the sky has a more intense and deeper blue; and surely we are breathing a milder and more balmy air. Yes—this is England! Nor can we help observing, as we proceed on our journey, how the mere luxuries of travelling appear to be augmented; for the coach now whirls along with greater rapidity; the horses now are obviously of a nobler and a finer breed; and even the coachman himself has become a statelier and more important personage: now cracking his whip with an air of conscious pride, he hurries along through the village, tipping as he goes, a knowing nod to the smirking wench of a bar-maid, who has just run out, and stands gaping and wondering at the inn door. His shining white broad-brimmed beaver hat—his brown coat with huge silken knotted buttons, and a large nose-gay through the button-hole on the left side—his corduroy unmentionables, and snow-white top boots, augur that he has taken no inconsiderable pains with his costume,—for the race of English coach drivers differs marvellously from the race destined to the same calling in Scotland, owing, as report saith, to there being less spirit among the Scottish than among the English coach proprietors; and owing, as we farthermore opine, to the duties of the coachman being of a more arduous and miscellaneous description in Scotland; for the Scottish stage coachman, we have been credibly assured, officiates not only as driver, but as groom, a thing hardly to be believed by the dashing coachmen on the Cheltenham or Brighton road, who have no duties to perform, save when officially enthroned upon their coach boxes. But the increased rattling and jolting of the coach—the more frequently repeated smacking of the whip—the half musical and half discordant sound of the guards' horn,—now apprise us that we are entering into some large town; and a peculiar sensation—that something "within which passeth show," and is every whit as intelligible as the booming of the gong, or the sound of the dinner bell—admonishes us that we shall dine at this hotel; and as we draw up close upon the pavement edge, the anxious look of the master, the hurrying to and fro of the waiters, each with a clean napkin swung under his arm; and the stout landlady seen in perspective at the end of the passage, signify that all within has been haste and anxious activity; and that a good dinner, "tired Nature's sweet restorer," here at length awaits us. By the memory of the great Epicurus, and the glorious achievements of that prince of gastronomers, Doctor Kitchener, we are not disciples of Hellogabulus; but, assuredly, it escapeth us not, that there is better fare exhibited at stage-coach dinners in England than in Scotland,—a fact peculiarly deserving of the attention of all honest and well-disposed landlords, landladies, and deputy-innkeepers, on this side of the Tweed. But these things are of the "earth, earthy;" nor do we desire any stimulus, beyond the healthy excitement inspired by the contemplation of Nature. At the next village, therefore, shall we alight. It consists but of the clergyman's rectory, and a few scattered cottages, and is within a few miles of the spot which was chosen by Milton as the scene for Co-

mus. Here, then, we rest on the brow of a small hill which commands an extensive prospect; for, from this point, the eye may wander over five adjoining and beautiful counties; and now bearing in mind Scotland, we cannot fail to observe how much more uniform is the face of the whole prospect of this English scene; for, in no direction do we here observe any wild and rugged peaks of rocks or mountains—no sudden depressions into wide and deep glens—no openings into extended and winding ravines—no bare bleak moors, with here and there a fertile spot, like "beauty sleeping in the lap of horror." No. There is less variety, less contrast. The whole scene is chastened and softened down into gentle undulations of rich and fertile land, which, compared with the scenery of the north, seems like a sea becalmed on a bright summer day, contrasted with the more sublime and awful spectacle of a sea, when its billows are raging mountains high amidst the terrors of the tempest. But let us descend this gentle declivity, and enter the road; and here, again, we cannot but remark, that the thick hedge, rising high on each side the road, and the trees, the boughs of which almost droop with their luxuriant and abundant foliage, seem as if Nature, prodigal of her munificence, sought to shelter alike from sunshine and from storm, the weary pedlar, as much as the more wealthy traveller. Nor is this all; for the shortness of the roads, and the graceful curves they take in sweeping gradually out of sight, have, in most parts of England, a peculiarly picturesque effect, seeming indeed, to invite our footsteps onward, and inducing a belief, that, at every turning, some new and more lovely prospect will open upon our enchanted sight. But, behold! the road is here bisected with an opening; it is a green lane, so narrow, that neither carriage, gig, baggage-wagon, nor cart, can pass along; and on each side arises a bank, covered with weeds and wild-flowers, exhaling delicious odours; while, above them, a hedge-row, prodigal of its leafy branches, curtains out even a glimpse of the adjoining corn field. Never have we, in our northern rambles, met with a green lane worth entering; not that we would hesitate, were we a travelling bagman, to explore the most wintry looking by-road that ever ran across a country. All we mean is, simply, that we have never, north of the Tweed, met with that retired, quiet, grassy looking green retreat, which, under the form of a "green lane" in England, seems destined for the evening walk of two confiding and loving beings, who may there pour forth their secret vows, interrupted only by the occasional murmurs of the passing wind, and overlooked only by the all-seeing eye of Heaven. Such a green lane as this is a peculiar feature of English scenery, and is worth travelling a thousand miles to walk through on a quiet summer evening. Here we may again pause to look around, nor are we less struck with the smooth and verdant aspect of the country. Here extend the richest pasture grounds,—there, crops of turnips, not indeed, drilled, as in Scotland, (a practice now becoming general in English counties,) but broad cast,—there, again, the richest yellow-looking corn fields, which now reflect, with many softened and chastened hues, the rays of the setting sun. Hush! we hear the light silvery tones of a sheep bell in the adjoining field. It is a sound we do not remember to have heard in our country rambles through Scotland; but, in the silence and twilight of evening, it has an extremely pleasing, nay touching effect. We see, too, from this point, rising above the trees, the village spire, which, "tapering points to heaven;" and, far as we have travelled, we feel forced to confess, that in no country have we seen simpler and more appropriate buildings for the worship of the great God. But, even now, we have entered the churchyard, and meet a train of young persons, chiefly dressed in white, bearing in their hands flowers. They do not speak to each other; but one of them sobs aloud. Here let us pause. They make their way over the "bar-bound mounds, significant of the repose of those who have died in hope and faith. They kneel. Their young hearts are now pouring forth a stream of fervent prayer. They rise, and scatter the flowers over a new-raised grave. There is something peculiarly affecting in this simple, but heartfelt ceremony. We would willingly abolish all needless forms and customs, and do not even admire the *Père la Chaise* in Paris; because it is not kept up as a matter of feeling, but of public exhibition. The flowers we there behold, may excite soothing and pleasing associations in the mind of a stranger; but these soon vanish, when we recollect that they are not placed there as tributes of love and affection, but for the idle purpose of worldly ostentation. How different is it with the simple ceremony which we have so often witnessed in England, when a gentle and beloved being has been cut down like a flower, in the spring of life. Young persons dressed in white, the emblem of purity and innocence, bear the coffin themselves to the grave; they afterwards, generally in the dusk of the evening, go together, carrying flowers, and, after praying round the grave, plant them in the earth. This custom, so affecting, when voluntarily performed, and without any desire of vain display, we are sorry to observe is now fast dying out, and is only preserved in a few counties.

immediately bordering on Wales. We have repeatedly, however, witnessed the ceremony under the most touching circumstances, and seldom have failed to remember the beautiful lines of the poet Herrick:—

Thus, thus, and thus, we compass round  
Thy harmless and enchanted ground;  
And as we sing thy dirge, we will  
The daffodil  
And other flowers, lay upon  
The altar of our love, thy stone,  
May no wolf nor screech owl stir  
A wing about thy sepulchre,  
No boisterous winds or storms go thither  
To starve or wither  
Thy soft sweet earth; but, like a spring  
Love keep it ever flourishing!

But, passing through the rude little country churchyard gate, we re-enter the road; and as we walk back to the village, hear the chimes, or evening bells, which are still rung almost in every village in England, to summon the peasantry to their labours, or to advise them that they may cease their toils. Here, too, we meet with an English labourer, returning from his daily occupation. He is dressed in a coarse, and, without offence, we must add, dirty-looking frock, thrown over his shoulders, plaited on the breast, and descending to a little above the knees. Upon his shoulder he suspends a spade, a hoe, and some farming utensils; and his walk is heavy and cumbersome. Behind him follows a young clownish looking boy, probably his son, who bears upon his shoulder a pole, at the end of which is hung a small barrel, which, probably, was filled with cyder or perry, the beverages of the county. But twilight is now stealing up the valley, and we shall retire to the village, to take "our ease and our own inn." But we do not do so, without promising to renew our perambulations, for the purpose of pointing out those minute differences, which, when grouped together, constitute the whole distinction between Scotland and England.

## COMETS.

In our previous article on this subject, it was shewn that the forthcoming luminary will occupy that point of the earth's course round the sun (and hence the only place in which there is the least danger of its mingling its atmosphere with the earth's) a month before that planet reaches the same spot. This would at once decide the point, but for the following objection:—With respect to comets, the theoretic position calculated, and the real position observed, do not exactly coincide; and this difference cannot be accounted for upon the principle of planetary attraction: hence has arisen the theory, that the resistance of a subtle fluid called ether, which is supposed to fill space, is the cause. There can be little doubt that such is the fact. The question then comes to be, how much will this ether retard the velocity of the comet? Will that body be stayed so long in its progress as to afford the earth an opportunity of coming up with it? It may be observed, that the resistance which this fluid offers to the earth is not appreciable, because of the density of our planet; whereas comets, being for the most part simple masses of light vapours, are susceptible of being sensibly retarded. [The principle of bodies of the same bulk, but of unequal weights, passing through the atmosphere with different degrees of velocity, will be found explained in the article *Attraction*, No. 26 of this Journal.] However startling it may at first sight appear, theory and observation demonstrate the fact, that the motion of the comet will be *accelerated*, and *not retarded*—that its encroachment upon the line of the earth's orbit will be rather before than after the time specified. The cause of this can be easily explained. The rapidity with which a body revolves round the sun depends upon its proximity to that luminary. This being allowed, and it is indisputable, the whole mystery becomes plain. The comet is in the first instance retarded,—its centrifugal force, or the rapidity with which it recedes from the centre of the sun, is diminished. Now, a little reflection will show that this is just equivalent to an increase of the sun's attractive powers,—hence the comet being brought nearer to the sun, the dimensions of its primitive orbit will be reduced, but its motion, according to the principle already laid down, will be *increased*. Thus, then, the resistance of the ether, instead of affording any grounds for alarm, must be looked upon as another strong argument against the probability of the dreaded catastrophe occurring.

But another question arises: although the collision should not take place, will the comet being able, in any way, sensibly to affect the earth; for instance, will it modify, in any shape, the seasons of the present year? In 1811, a brilliant comet illuminated the heavens. That year was remarkable for the elevation of its temperature, the abundance of its harvest, and the superior quality of its wines,—the cause of all this, vulgar prejudice ascribed to the influence of the luminary. That the idea was visionary and absurd, appears both from fact and theory. Comets, say these sapient reasoners,



with our globe with their beams. Now it is a fact, that a majority of the years most prolific in comets were not distinguished for their temperature. For instance, 1808 was a cold year, and yet seldom have so many comets appeared in so short a time. 1829 was rather a cold year, and yet one appeared. Last year none made their appearance, and yet the temperature was higher than it was in 1819, which was honoured with a visit from three, one of which was very brilliant. There is another fact strongly militating against the theory of cometary influence; it is that cold years are commonly cloudy, and the most brilliant comets might pass unperceived through a sky thus enveloped.

To set the subject at rest, let us pursue it through its details. According to all philosophical principles, a comet can act upon the earth only in three ways,—by attraction,—by reflecting luminous and calorific rays,—and by the gaseous matter which composes its nebulousness, or its tail, which, in certain positions, may happen to invade the terrestrial atmosphere. It is unnecessary to examine this third species of action, as the forthcoming comet possesses no tail, and its nebulousity will be situated at an immense distance from the earth.

The comet of 1811 had a brilliant tail with a maximum length of forty-one millions of leagues; but it could not possibly touch the earth, for at its nearest approach it was distant forty-seven millions of leagues. At the height of its splendour, it did not throw upon the earth a light equal to the one-tenth part of that we receive from the full moon. The rays were concentrated to the focus of the largest lens, and acted on the blackened bulb of a thermometer, and yet no sensible effect was produced. Now, since by this mode of experimenting, an hundredth part of a degree of an ordinary thermometer would be perceptible, we must for ever abandon the idea of the calorific influence of the comets being capable of affecting the earth so as to produce an abundant crop.

Let us now consider the attractive power of comets. The tides of the ocean are caused by the attraction of the moon, and upon the power of this attraction depends the size of the tide. Now the comet of 1811 exercised not the slightest influence over the waters of the deep; hence the action of the comet upon the earth can only amount to a very trifling part of that of the moon. The attractive influence of the moon cannot fail to produce an atmospheric tide, the strength of which would be ascertained by the barometer; and yet, from an immense number of observations made in different places, and with the utmost exactness, the strength of the lunar atmospheric tide was scarcely susceptible on the scale of the instrument. After this, it would be ridiculous to suppose that in this way the comet could exercise any influence upon the earth. The vine-dressers of the continent must, therefore, look to something else than the appearance of the expected luminary for a realization of their hopes of an abundant harvest.

#### ON THE PHYSICAL CONSTITUTION OF COMETS.

In describing, in a former paper, the most common appearance assumed by a comet, I mentioned the nucleus, coma, and tail. I shall now enter into a detail of what telescopic observations have discovered of the peculiar constitution of these heavenly bodies. It has been already mentioned, that many comets have no perceptible tail; that several are destitute of any apparent nucleus; but none have been discovered, after having been carefully observed by the telescope, wanting that species of nebulousity or mistiness which the ancients named the coma.

#### OF THE NEBULOSITY.

Among the comets destitute of any apparent nucleus, and which seem to be simple globular masses of vapours slightly condensed towards the centre, it is only necessary to mention those of 1795, 7, and 8, observed by Olbers, and the small one of 1804, the nebulousity of which had a diameter of 6000 miles.

Seneca informs us, that stars could be seen through comets. This is true of those destitute of any nucleus; and the nebulousity is so rare and transparent that a feeble light, though placed at an immense distance behind it, will be visible. Herschel discovered a star of the sixth magnitude through the comet of 1795, and others have done the same even with respect to stars of considerably smaller magnitude.

When the comet possesses a nucleus, the nebulousity rarely tends towards it with a progressively increasing intensity; on the contrary, the parts of the nebulousity next the nucleus are the least luminous. They appear to be very rare and transparent. At some distance from the centre there is a sudden increase of brightness, which gives the comet an appearance of being encircled by a luminous ring. Sometimes two, and even three of these have been discovered, each separated by an interval where the light was scarcely perceptible.

To form some idea of this, let us simply suppose there are three layers of clouds, at three different heights, enveloping the earth; and that all of these, besides being diaphanous, possess certain optical qualities distinguishing them from the pure atmospheric air which is interposed between each. In the comet of 1811, the

comet was not less than 30,000 miles in thickness, and its inner surface was 36,000 miles distant from the nucleus. When the comet has the appendage of a tail, the ring appears closed only on the side next the sun, and is semicircular. The extremities of this semicircle are the points of the departure of those rays of light, the elongation of which forms the limits of the tail.

#### THE NUCLEUS.

Comets have often nuclei similar to the planets in their form and brilliancy. In general they are very small, but the reverse is sometimes the case. The comet of 1796, had a nucleus thirty-three miles in diameter, and in one of those which appeared in 1811, it amounted to 3267 miles. A knowledge of the nature of this nucleus is of considerable importance, and, accordingly, the subject of its transparency or non-transparency has been warmly canvassed, by several philosophers. One party states that they have seen stars through this nucleus, and others that they have seen them completely eclipsed by it. The following theory has been proposed:—We have seen that there are comets without any apparent nucleus, which, in all their extent, shine with the same splendour, and yet are nothing but simple agglomerations of a gaseous substance. A second degree of concentration of these vapours, let us suppose, produces a nucleus in the centre of the nebulousity remarkable for its brilliancy, but, being still in a liquid state, is diaphanous. At a more advanced period, the liquid being sufficiently cooled will be enveloped with a solid crust, and from that moment all transparency will cease. This nucleus being interposed between a star and the observer, will produce an eclipse as complete as those resulting daily with the moon and planets. Nothing absolutely disproves the existence of comets with a solid nucleus. The variety of aspect, and brightness which these bodies present, proves that they are not all fashioned after a uniform manner. The archives of science supply us with a variety of facts in support of this position. Keeping out of view those numerous stories which would doubtless be considered fabulous, recourse will only be had to incontestable observations.

In the forty-third year before the Christian era, a comet was seen by day with the naked eye, and was looked upon by the Romans as the metamorphosed soul of Cæsar, who had been assassinated a short time preceding the event. In 1402 there appeared two very remarkable comets. The first so brilliant that, in March, the light of the sun at meridian day did not prevent its being visible, as contemporary authors express it, to the extent of two fathoms. The second appeared in June, and was seen a long time before sunset. It was pretended that this comet announced the approaching death of Jean Galéas Visconti. This prince, who had got his horoscope calculated in youth, was so struck with the appearance of the comet, that the fear incident upon this no doubt contributed to realize the prediction.

Cardan relates that, in 1532, a comet appeared at mid-day, which greatly excited the curiosity of the inhabitants of Milan. At the time it shone (about the period of Sforza II.'s death) Venus was not in a favourable position to be seen in presence of the sun. The star of Cardan was then a comet, and is the fourth mentioned by historians as visible at mid-day. The famous comet of 1577, was discovered by Tycho Brahe before sunset.

But to come to a more modern luminary, the observations upon which have been properly detailed. On the 1st of February the comet of 1744 was, according to Chezeaux, more luminous than Sirius, the brightest star in the heavens. On the 8th it equalled Jupiter; and some days after it did not yield in splendour to Venus. At the commencement of the following month it was seen by several persons at one o'clock of the day.

After mentioning the appearance of comets so brilliant as these, and knowing that others lately observed vanish almost before the telescope can be brought to bear upon the point of space which they occupy, it can scarcely be doubted that these bodies are of different physical constitutions. It may be concluded, then, that there are comets *without* a nucleus, comets whose nucleus is probably diaphanous; and, lastly, comets more brilliant than the planets, and whose nuclei are probably solid and opaque.

#### OF THE TAIL.

That long luminous train with which comets have been frequently accompanied, has in all ages and countries borne the name of tail.

Pierre Appian, in observing attentively the comet of 1531, noticed that the tail, whatever might be the motion or situation of the star, was placed on the prolongation of the line which joined the sun and the nucleus. Some philosophers have attempted to generalize this principle, but at the expense of facts. It is true that usually the tail is placed behind the comet and opposite to the sun, but the line which unites the two does not

always conform to the axis of the tail. It has also been found, that the tail inclines constantly towards the region which the comet has quitted. It would appear from this, that in passing through a gaseous medium, the substance of which it is formed experienced a greater resistance than that of the nucleus. In proof of this, it may be stated, that the deviation is greater the farther from the head. These deviations are such that the tail acquires a very sensible curve. That of 1744, for instance, formed nearly a quadrant in the extent of some degrees. Suppose, then, that the cause of the curvature is correctly accounted for, it will follow that the convexity will always be turned from that region towards which the comet travels. Only two imperfectly ascertained exceptions have been offered to this rule.

The tail enlarges greatly at a distance from the head of the comet. The sides of the curvature are more luminous than the middle, which commonly shews an obscure stripe, dividing the tail longitudinally into two distinct, and often almost equal, parts. Ancient observers believed this stripe to be the shadow of the comet. But this explanation cannot apply to tails not directed towards the sun. It is more consistent with phenomena to consider the tail as a hollow cone. The visual line directed to the borders of this cone, it is easily seen, will take in a greater quantity of nebulous particles than the line passing through the centre. Now, whether these particles shine by themselves, or only reflect the sun's rays, it is their total number which, in each direction, ought to determine the intensity of the light.

Comets have sometimes several tails. That of 1744, on the 7th and 8th of March, had six, each about six degrees in breadth, and from 30 to 44 in length. Their borders were bright and well defined, while their middle emitted only a very attenuated light; and, between two of the different tails, it was as dark as the rest of the sky. These tails sometimes stretch out to the prodigious length of 97 degrees; so the head of the comet could thus set, whilst a portion of its tail remained in the zenith.

My readers will perhaps, look for some details of the nature of cometary light,—of the causes of their tails,—what changes their forms,—what gives rise to the systems of concentric envelopes, which the nebulousity sometimes forms—are comets inhabited, &c. &c. But, as nothing certain can be stated on these points, I refrain from indulging in vague hypotheses, or philosophical romance. Cometary astronomy has made great progress within the last century and a half, but it still remains in a state of considerable obscurity, notwithstanding the zeal and assiduity which philosophers have displayed to elucidate and explain the subject.

#### MY NATIVE BAY.

My native bay is calm and bright,  
As e'er it was of yore  
When in the days of hope and love,  
I stood upon its shore;  
The sky is glowing, soft, and blue,  
As once in youth it smiled,  
When summer seas and summer skies  
Were always bright and mild.

The sky—how oft hath darkness dwelt,  
Since then, upon its breast;  
The sea—how oft have tempests broke  
Its gentle dream of rest!  
So oft hath darker woe come o'er  
Calm self-enjoying thought;  
And passion's storms a wilder scene  
Within my bosom wrought.

Now after years of absence, pass'd  
In wretchedness and pain,  
I come and find those seas and skies  
All calm and bright again.  
The darkness and the storm from both  
Have trackless pass'd away;  
And gentle as in youth, once more  
Thou seem'st, my native bay!

Oh, that like thee, when toil is o'er,  
And all my griefs are past,  
This ravaged bosom might subside  
To peace and joy at last!  
And while it lay all calm like thee,  
In pure untroubled sleep,  
Oh, might a heaven as bright as this  
Be mirror'd in its deep!

R. C.

#### AN AMERICAN STORY.

THE following story, the simple and domestic incidents of which may be deemed scarcely worth relating after such a lapse of time, awakened some degree of interest, a hundred years ago, in a principal seaport of the Bay Province. The twilight of an autumn day; a parlour on the second floor of a small house, plainly furnished, as becometh the middling circumstances of its inhabitants, yet decorated with little curiosities from beyond the sea, and a few delicate specimens of Indian manufacture,—these are the only particulars to be premised in regard to scene and season. Two young and comely women sat together by the fireside, nursing their mutual and peculiar sorrows. They were the recent brides of two brothers, a sailor and a landsman, and two successive days had brought tidings of the death of each, by the chances of Canadian

warfare, and the tempestuous Atlantic. The universal sympathy excited by this bereavement drew numerous condoling guests to the habitation of the widowed sisters. Several, among whom was the minister, had remained till the verge of evening; when one by one, whispering many comfortable passages of Scripture that were answered by more abundant tears, they took their leaves, and departed to their own happier homes. The mourners, though not insensible to the kindness of their friends, had yearned to be left alone. United, as they had been, by the relationship of the living, and now more closely so by that of the dead, each felt as if whatever consolation her grief admitted, were to be found in the bosom of the other. They joined their hearts, and wept together silently. But after an hour of such indulgence, one of the sisters, all of whose emotions were influenced by her mild, quiet, yet not feeble character, began to recollect the precepts of resignation and endurance, which piety had taught her, when she did not think to need them. Her misfortune, besides, as earliest known, should earliest cease to interfere with her regular course of duties; accordingly, having placed the table before the fire, and arranged a frugal meal, she took the hand of her companion.

"Come, dearest sister; you have eaten not a morsel to-day," she said, "Arise, I pray you, and let us ask a blessing on that which is provided for us."

Her sister-in-law was of a lively and irritable temperament, and the first pang of her sorrow had been expressed by shrieks and passionate lamentations. She now shrunk from Mary's words like a wounded sufferer from a hand that revives the throb.

"There is no blessing left for me, neither will I ask it," cried Margaret, with a fresh burst of tears. "Would it were His will that I might never taste food more."

Yet she trembled at these rebellious expressions, almost as soon as they were uttered, and, by degrees, Mary succeeded in bringing her sister's mind nearer to the situation of her own. Time went on, and their usual hour of repose arrived. The brothers and their brides, entering the married state with more than the slender means which then sanctioned such a step, had confederated themselves in one household, with equal rights to the parlour, and claiming exclusive privileges in two sleeping rooms contiguous to it. Thither the widowed ones retired, after heaping ashes upon the dying embers of their fire, and placing a lighted lamp upon the hearth. The doors of both chambers were left open, so that a part of the interior of each, and the beds with their unclosed curtains were reciprocally visible. Sleep did not steal upon the sisters at one and the same time. Mary experienced the effect often consequent upon grief quietly borne, and soon sunk into temporary forgetfulness, while Margaret became more disturbed and feverish, in proportion as the night advanced with its deepest and stillest hours. She lay listening to the drops of rain, that came down in monotonous succession, unswayed by a breath of wind; and a nervous impulse continually caused her to lift her head from the pillow, and gaze into Mary's chamber and the intermediate apartment. The cold light of the lamp threw the shadows of the furniture up against the wall, stamping them immovably there, except when they were shaken by a sudden flicker of the flame. Two vacant arm-chairs were in their old positions on opposite sides of the hearth, where the brothers had been wont to sit in young and laughing dignity, as heads of families; two humbler seats were near them, the true thrones of that little empire, where Mary and herself had exercised, in love, a power that love had won. The cheerful radiance of the fire had shone upon the happy circle, and the dead glimmer of the lamp might have befitted their reunion now. While Margaret groaned in bitterness, she heard a knock at the street door.

"How would my heart have leapt at that sound but yesterday!" thought she, remembering the anxiety with which she had long awaited tidings from her husband. "I care not for it now; let them begone, for I will not arise."

But even while a sort of childish fretfulness made her thus resolve, she was breathing hurriedly, and straining her ears to catch a repetition of the summons. It is difficult to be convinced of the death of one whom we have deemed another self. The knocking was now renewed in slow and regular strokes, apparently given with the soft end of a doubled fist, and was accompanied by words, faintly heard through several thicknesses of wall. Margaret looked to her sister's chamber, and beheld her still lying in the depths of sleep. She arose, placed her foot upon the floor, and slightly arrayed herself, trembling between fear and eagerness as she did so.

"Heaven help me!" sighed she. "I have nothing left to fear, and methinks I am ten times more a coward than ever."

Seizing the lamp from the hearth, she hastened to the window that overlooked the street door. It was a lattice, turning upon hinges; and having thrown it back, she stretched her head a little way into the moist atmosphere. A lantern was reddening the front of the house, and melting its light in the neighbouring puddles, while a deluge of darkness overwhelmed every other object. As the window grated on its hinges, a man in a broad brimmed hat and blanket coat, stepped from under the shelter of the projecting story, and looked upward to discover whom his application had aroused. Margaret knew him as a friendly innkeeper of the town.

"What would you have, Goodman Parker?" cried the widow.

"Lack-a-day, is it you, mistress Margaret?" replied the innkeeper. "I was afraid it might be your sister Mary; for I hate to see a young woman in trouble, when I haven't a word of comfort to whisper her."

"For Heaven's sake, what news do you bring?" screamed Margaret.

"Why there has been an express through the town

within this half-hour," said Goodman Parker, "traveling from the eastern jurisdiction, with letters from the governor and council. He tarried at my house to refresh himself with a drop and a morsel, and I asked him what tidings on the frontiers. He tells me we had the better in the skirmish you wot of, and that thirteen men reported slain, are well and sound, and your husband among them. Besides, he is appointed of the escort to bring the captivated Frenchers and Indians home to the province jail. I judged you wouldn't mind being broke off your rest, and so I stepped over to tell you. Good night."

So saying, the honest man departed; and his lantern gleamed along the street, bringing to view indistinct shapes of things, and the fragments of a world, like order glimmering through chaos, or memory roaming over the past. But Margaret staid not to watch these picturesque effects. Joy flashed into her heart, and lighted it up at once, and breathless, and with winged steps, she flew to the bedside of her sister. She paused, however, at the door of the chamber, while a thought of pain broke in upon her.

"Poor Mary!" said she to herself. "Shall I waken her, to feel her sorrow sharpened by my happiness? No; I will keep it within my own bosom till the morrow."

She approached the bed to discover if Mary's sleep were peaceful. Her face was turned partly inward to the pillow, and had been hidden there to weep; but a look of motionless contentment was now visible upon it, as if her heart, like a deep lake, had grown calm because its dead had sunk down so far within. Happy is it, and strange, that the lighter sorrows are those from which dreams are chiefly fabricated. Margaret shrunk from disturbing her sister-in-law, and felt as if her own better fortune had rendered her involuntarily unfaithful, and as if altered and diminished affection must be the consequence of the disclosure she had to make. With a sudden step she turned away. But joy could not long be repressed, even by circumstances that would have excited heavy grief at another moment. Her mind was thronged with delightful thoughts, till sleep stole on and transformed them to visions, more delightful and more wild, like the breath of winter, (but what a cold comparison!) working fantastic tracery upon a window.

When the night was far advanced, Mary awoke with a sudden start. A vivid dream had latterly involved her in its unreal life, of which, however, she could only remember that it had been broken in upon at the most interesting point. For a little time slumber hung about her like a morning mist, hindering her from perceiving the distinct outline of her situation. She listened with imperfect consciousness to two or three volleys of a rapid and eager knocking, and first she deemed the noise a matter of course, like the breath she drew; next, it appeared a thing in which she had no concern; and lastly she became aware that it was a summons necessary to be obeyed. At the same moment, the pang of recollection started into her mind; the pall of sleep was thrown back from the face of grief; the dim light of the chamber, and the objects therein revealed, had retained all her suspended ideas, and restored them as soon as she unclosed her eyes. Again, there was a quick peal upon the street door. Fearing that her sister would also be disturbed, Mary wrapped herself in a cloak and hood, took the lamp from the hearth, and hastened to the window. By some accident, it had been left unhasped, and yielded easily to her hand.

"Who's there?" asked Mary, trembling as she looked forth.

The storm was over and the moon was up; it shone upon broken clouds above, and below upon houses black with moisture, and upon little lakes of the fallen rains curling into silver beneath the quick enchantment of a breeze. A young man in a sailor's dress, wet as if he had come out of the depths of the sea, stood alone under the window. Mary recognized him as one whose livelihood was gained by short voyages along the coast; nor did she forget, that, previous to her marriage, he had been an unsuccessful wooer of her own.

"What do you seek here, Stephen?" said she.

"Cheer up, Mary, for I seek to comfort you," answered the rejected lover. "You must know I got home not ten minutes ago, and the first thing my good mother told me was he news about your husband. So, without saying a word to the old woman, I clapt on my hat, and ran out of the house. I couldn't have slept a wink before speaking to you, Mary, for the sake of old times."

"Stephen, I thought better of you!" exclaimed the widow, with gushing tears, and preparing to close the lattice; for she was no wit inclined to imitate the first wife of Zadiq.

"But stop, and hear my story out," cried the young sailor; "I tell you we spoke a brig yesterday afternoon, bound in from Old England. And who do you think I saw standing on deck, well and hearty, only a bit thinner than he was five months ago?"

Mary leaned from the window, but could not speak.

"Why, it was your husband himself," continued the generous seaman. "He and three others saved themselves on a spar, when the Blessing turned bottom upwards. The brig will beat into the bay by day-light, with this wind, and

you'll see him here to-morrow. There's the comfort I bring you, Mary; and so good night."

He hurried away, while Mary watched him with a doubt of waking reality, that seemed stronger or weaker as he alternately entered the shade of the houses, or emerged into the broad streaks of moonlight. Gradually, however, a blessed flood of conviction swelled into her heart, in strength enough to overwhelm her, had its increase been more abrupt. Her first impulse was to rouse her sister-in-law, and communicate the new-born gladness. She opened the chamber door, which had been closed in the course of the night, though not latched, advanced to the bedside, and was about to lay her hand upon the slumberer's shoulder. But then she remembered that Margaret would awake to thoughts of death and woe, rendered not the less bitter by their contrast with her own felicity. She suffered the rays of the lamp to fall upon the unconscious form of the bereaved one. Margaret lay in unquiet sleep, and the drapery was displaced around her; her young cheek was rosy-tinted, and her lips half opened in a vivid smile; an expression of joy, debarred its passage by her sealed eyelids, struggled forth like incense from the whole countenance.

"My poor sister! you will waken too soon from that happy dream," thought Mary.

Before retiring she set down the lamp and endeavoured to arrange the bed-clothes, so that the chill air might not do harm to the feverish slumberer. But her hand trembled against Margaret's neck, a tear also fell upon her cheek, and she suddenly awoke.

## SLEEP WALKING.

SLEEP walking is in general a profitless occupation. There are, however, instances in which somnabulists have employed themselves in their daily labours, with considerable diligence. We were lately told in the newspapers of a servant girl in the neighbourhood of Falkirk, who, having been one evening desired to prepare a baking of cakes early next morning, arose in the night, brought water, of which there happened to be none in the house, from the canal whence it was commonly taken for the use of the family, baked a large farl, placed it upon the girdle, which she adjusted properly over the grate, but overlooked the necessity of lighting the fire. All this she discovered next morning when she awoke. What is more to our present purpose, is a relation given by Henricus ab Heeres, in his *Medical Observations*, of a student whose poetical talent was more lively at such times than when awake. This young man cudgelled his brains sometimes the whole day, in making verses, correcting and blotting them out again; and, not being able to please himself, was forced to leave many gaps till a more lucky sitting. Sometimes, after leaving his compositions in this imperfect state, he would rise in the night, open his desk, fall to writing, fill up the chasms, read aloud what he had written, laugh heartily at what pleased him, and call his chamber-fellow to do the like, and yet all this while he was fast asleep; then putting off his shoes and clothes, shutting his desk, and laying his papers aside, he went to bed again, and slept till he was called up, utterly ignorant of what he had writ, said, or done in the night time. In the morning, returning to his studies, and finding the blanks in his verses filled up with his own hand, he was at a loss to know whether it was done by man or some evil genius, and was in great perplexity, till his fellow students set his mind at rest by a recital of his behaviour during his sleep. Some time after, he left the schools, and, betaking himself to a virtuous wife, was haunted by the same infirmity, would rise in the night, take the child out of the cradle, walk about the house with it, and answer any question truly that his wife then propounded to him, which he would not do at other times. About the fortieth year of his age, and to his great satisfaction, this custom left him, unless he had drunk hard overnight. His wife and whole family, that had seen him walking, reading, and writing, being desired to observe it, affirmed that he spoke as plainly as if he had been awake, and that his eyes were open all the time, of which he was totally ignorant, and sincerely protested he saw not at all, and remembered nothing of what they said he had done.

## SHARP ENOUGH ALREADY.

A solicitor, who was remarkable for the length and sharpness of his nose, once told a lady, that if she did not immediately settle a matter in dispute, he would file a bill against her. "Indeed, sir," said the lady, "there is no necessity for you to file your bill, for I am sure it is sharp enough already."



## ENGLISH ANECDOTES.

## PROMOTION.

The late Duke of York once remarked to Colonel W. at the mess of the 11th regiment, that the colonel was uncommonly bald, and, although a younger man than his royal highness, he stood more in need of a wig. The colonel, who had been of very long standing in the service, and whose promotion had been by no means rapid, informed his royal highness, that his baldness could be very easily accounted for. "In what manner?" asked his royal highness, rather eagerly. To which Colonel W. replied, "By junior officers stepping over my head." The duke was so pleased with the reply, that the gallant colonel obtained promotion in a few days afterwards.

## A LAWYER CANNOT BE TOO BAREFACED.

A barrister observed to a learned brother in court, that he thought his whiskers were very unprofessional. "You are right," replied his friend; "a lawyer cannot be too barefaced."

## NEW CONSTRUCTION OF "EQUAM MEMENTO."

A gentleman told Lord North, that, from a variety of losses, he had found himself compelled to reduce his establishment. "And what," said his lordship, "have you done with the fine mare you used to ride?" "I have sold her." "Then you have not attended to Horace's maxim,—*"Equam memento rebus in arduis servare,"*

## VENETIAN BLINDS.

Three Venetians, whom the late Lord Byron brought with him into this country, were so dreadfully attacked by ophthalmia, as almost entirely to lose their eyesight. "What can we do with these poor fellows?" said his lordship, when he heard of their misfortune. "Why," said Dr. L., "at the worst, we can set each of them up as a *Venetian blind*."

## LORD LOUGHBOROUGH.

Lord Loughborough rallying a physician one day, on the inefficiency of his prescriptions, the doctor said, he defied any of his patients to find fault with him. "That," answered the witty lord, "is exactly what the hangman says."

## NATIONAL PARADOXES.

Somebody once remarked, that the Englishman is never happy but when he is miserable; the Scotchman is never at home but when he is abroad; and the Irishman is never at peace but when he is fighting."

## A HARD RUN.

A droll equivocal, and not unseasonable, took place between Sir — and Mr. M—, at the time of the great cash distresses in 1826. The baronet overtook the latter on running from a fox chase; and, supposing the banker had been one of the field, and wishing to say something civil as he passed, observed, "A hard run to-day, Mr. M." "Oh no, sir, I assure you!" replied the conscious man of money, "no such thing, sir; not in the least *hard-pressed* to-day; no run at all!" "Why we run him in!" rejoined the baronet, with evident surprise: "would you have all knocked off?" "Oh! you are talking of the fox, perhaps," said the banker, "and I was thinking of my bank. I have not been hunting, but *hunted* all the week by a *pack of fools*."

## A MOVING DISCOURSE.

A certain reverend drone in the country, preaching a very dull sermon to a congregation not used to him, many of them slunk out of the church, one after another, before the sermon was nearly ended. "Truly," said a gentleman present, "this learned doctor has made a very *moving* discourse."

## PURITANISM AT BOWLS.

The puritans carried their peculiar tenets into the minutest affairs of life. When Lord Brooke, one of the number, played at bowls, he would sometimes run after his cast, and cry, "Rub, rub, rub," in the eager but absurd hope that such a cry would give effect to his play. On such occasions his chaplain would run after him with equal eagerness, and earnestly exclaim, "Oh, good my lord, you must leave that to God."

## FIAT LUX.

A bishop of Lincoln adopted the strange conceit of having the grand Scripture sentence, "*FIAT LUX*," painted on all the windows of his house. In his hall, in particular, it was so thickly painted, that the reverse of the command was observable, and, as a wag remarked, you could scarcely see for light. A mad scholar, at last, happened to wait upon the bishop, and observing the opacity of the light, fell a-breaking the windows with his stick. Being carried by

the servants into the presence of the bishop, and questioned as to the cause of his conduct, "Why, my lord," answered he, "I was only obeying your lordship's commands: *FIAT LUX*."

## WIT IN CHOOSING TEXTS.

A young preacher, in the time of James I., being appointed to hold forth before the vice-chancellor and heads of the colleges of Oxford, chose for his text, "What, cannot ye watch one hour?" which carried a personal allusion, as the vice-chancellor happened to be one of those heavy-headed persons who cannot attend church without falling asleep. The preacher repeating his text, in an emphatic manner, at the end of every division of his discourse, the unfortunate vice-chancellor as often awoke; and this happened so often, that at last all present could very well see the joke. The vice-chancellor was so nettled at the disturbance he had met with, and at the talk it occasioned, that he complained to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who immediately sent for the young man, to reprove him for what he had done. In the course of the conference which ensued between the archbishop and the preacher, the latter gave so many proofs of his wit and good sense, that his grace procured him the honour of preaching before the king. Here also he had his joke: he gave out his text in these words,—*"James First and Sixth, 'Waver not';"* which, of course, every body present saw to be a stroke at the indecisive character of the monarch. James, equally quick-sighted, exclaimed, "He is at me already;" but he was, upon the whole, so well pleased with this clerical wag, as to make him one of his chaplains in ordinary. He afterwards went to Oxford, and preached a farewell sermon on the text, "Sleep on now, and take your rest."

## THE SHARK.

There always follows, however, the most lively curiosity on the part of the sailors to learn what the shark has got stowed away in its inside: but they are often disappointed, for the stomach is generally empty. I remember one famous exception, indeed, when a very large fellow was caught on board the *Alceste*, in Anjeer Roads, at Java, when we were proceeding to China with the embassy under Lord Amherst. A number of ducks and hens, which had died in the night, were, as usual, thrown overboard in the morning, besides several baskets, and many other minor things, such as bundles of shavings and bits of cordage, all which things were found in this huge sea-monster's inside. But what excited most surprise and admiration was the hide of a buffalo, killed on board that day for the ship's company's dinner. The old sailor who had cut open the shark stood with a foot on each side, and drew up the articles one by one from the huge cavern into which they had been indiscriminately drawn. When the operator came at last to the buffalo's skin, he held it up before him like a curtain, and exclaimed, "There, my lads; d'ye see that! He has swallowed a buffalo, but he could not digest the hide."—*Captain Hall's Autobiography.*

## BIOGRAPHIC SKETCHES.

## WILLIAM BERRY.

The individual whom we this week introduce to notice, in our biographical department, was one who exhibited great talents of a peculiar order, under very unfortunate circumstances, and, what is far more, who, notwithstanding these unfavourable circumstances, conducted himself through life in the most creditable manner, as a private citizen, and as the father of a family.

William Berry, an ingenious artist, was born about the year 1730, and bred to the business of a seal engraver. After serving an apprenticeship under a Mr. Bolton, at Edinburgh, he commenced business for himself in that city, and soon became distinguished for the elegance of his designs, and the clearness and sharpness of his mode of cutting. At this time, the business of a stone engraver in the Scottish capital was confined to the cutting of ordinary seals, and the most elaborate work of this kind, which they undertook, was that of engraving the armorial bearings of the nobility. Mr. Berry's views were for several years confined to the usual drudgery of his art; but, by studying some ancient intaglios, he at length conceived the design of venturing into that higher walk, which might be said to bear the same relation to seal engraving, which historical painting does to portrait painting. The subject he chose for his first essay was a head of Sir Isaac Newton, which he executed with such precision and delicacy, as astonished all who had an opportunity of observing it. The modesty of Mr. Berry permitted him to consign this gem to the hands of a friend in

a retired situation of life, who had few opportunities of shewing it to others. He resumed his wonted drudgery, satisfied, we may suppose, with that secret consciousness, which, to some abstracted minds, is not to be increased, but rather spoilt, by the applause of the uninitiated multitude. For many years this ingenious man narrowed his mind to the cutting of heraldic seals; while, in reality, he must have known that his genius fitted him for a competition with the highest triumphs of Italian art. When he was occasionally asked to undertake somewhat finer work, he generally found, that, though he only demanded perhaps half the money which he could have earned in humbler work during the same space of time, yet even that was grudged by his employers; and he, therefore, felt, that mere considerations of worldly prudence demanded his almost exclusive attention to the ordinary walk of his profession.

Nevertheless, in the course of a few years, the impulse of genius so far overcame his scruples, that he executed various heads, any one of which would have been sufficient to ensure him immortal fame among judges of excellence in this department. Among these were heads of Thomson, author of "*The Seasons*," Mary Queen of Scots, Oliver Cromwell, Julius Caesar, a young Hercules, and Mr. Hamilton of Bangour, the well-known poet. Of these, only two were copies from the antique, and they were executed in the finest style of those celebrated intaglios. The young Hercules, in particular, possessed an unaffected plain simplicity—an union of youthful innocence, with strength and dignity—which struck every beholder as most appropriate to that mythological personage; while it was, at the same time, the most difficult of all expressions to be hit off by the faithful imitator of nature. As a painter finds it much less difficult to imitate any extravagant violence of character, than to represent, with truth and perspicuity, the elegant ease of the gentleman, so the painter can much more easily delineate the most violent contortions of countenance than that placid serenity, to express which requires a nice discrimination of such infinitely small degrees of variation, in certain lineaments, as totally to elude the observation of men on whose minds nature has not impressed, with her irresistible hand, that exquisite perceptive faculty, which constitutes the essence of genius in the fine arts.

Berry possessed this perceptive faculty to a degree which almost proved an obstruction rather than a help in his professional career. In his best performances, he himself remarked defects which no one else perceived, and which he believed might have been overcome by greater exertion, if for that greater exertion he could have spared the necessary time. Thus, while others applauded his intaglios, he looked upon them with a morbid feeling of vexation, arising from the sense of that struggle which his immediate personal wants constantly maintained with the nobler impulses of art, and to which his situation in the world promised no speedy cessation. This gave him an aversion to the higher department of his art, which, though indulged to his own temporary comfort, and the advantage of his family, was most unfortunate for the world.

In spite of every disadvantage, the works of Mr. Berry, few as they are in number, became gradually known in society at large, and some of his pieces were even brought into competition, by some distinguished cognoscenti, with those of Picler at Rome, who had hitherto been the unapproached sovereign of this department of the arts. Although the experience of Picler was that of a constant practitioner, while Mr. Berry had only attempted a few pieces at long intervals, in the course of a laborious life; although the former lived in a country where every artificial object was attuned to the principles of art, while Mr. Berry was reared in a soil remarkable for the absence of all such advantages, the latter was, by many judges, placed above his Italian contemporary. The respective works of the two artists were well known to each other; and each declared, with that manly kind of ingenuousness, which superior genius alone can confer on the human mind, that the other was greatly his superior.

Mr. Berry possessed not only the art of imitating busts or figures set before him, in which he could observe and copy the prominence or depression of the parts, but he possessed a faculty which presupposes a much nicer discrimination—that of being able to execute a figure in *relievo*, with perfect justness in all its parts, which was copied from a painting or drawing upon a flat surface. This was fairly put to the test in the head he executed of Hamilton of Bangour. That gentleman had been dead several years, when his relations wished to have a head of him executed by Berry. The artist had himself never seen Mr. Hamilton, and there remained no picture of him but an imperfect sketch, which was by no means a striking likeness. This was put into the hands of Mr. Berry by a person who had known the de-

ceased poet, and who pointed out the defects of the resemblance in the best way that words can be made to correct things of this nature; and from this picture, with the ideas that Mr. Berry had imbibed from the corrections, he made a head, which every one who knew Mr. Hamilton allowed to be one of the most perfect likenesses that could be wished for. In this, as in all his works, there was a correctness in the outline, and a truth and delicacy in the expression of the features, highly emulous of the best antiques, which were, indeed, the models on which he formed his taste.

The whole number of heads executed by Mr. Berry did not exceed a dozen; but, besides these, he executed some full-length figures of both men and animals, in his customary style of elegance. That attention, however, to the interests of a numerous family, which a man of sound principles, as Mr. Berry was, could never allow himself to lose sight of, made him forego those agreeable exertions for the more lucrative, though less pleasing, employment of cutting heraldic seals, which may be said to have been his constant employment from morning to night, for forty years together, with an assiduity that almost surpasses belief. In this department, he was, without dispute, the first artist of his time; but even here, a modesty, which was so peculiarly his own, and an invariable desire of giving perfection to every thing he put out of his hand, prevented him from drawing such emoluments from his labours as they deserved. Of this the following anecdote will serve as an illustration, and as an additional testimony of his very great skill:—Henry, Duke of Buccleuch, on succeeding to his title and estates, was desirous of having a seal cut, with his arms properly emblazoned upon it. But, as there were no fewer than thirty-two compartments in the shield, which was of necessity confined to a very small space, so as to leave room for the supporters and other ornaments within the compass of a seal of ordinary size, he found it a matter of great difficulty to get it executed. Though a native of Scotland himself, the noble Duke had no idea that there was a man of first-rate eminence in this art in Edinburgh; and, accordingly, he had applied to the first seal engraver in London and Paris, all of whom declared it to be beyond their power. At this time, Berry was mentioned to him with such powerful recommendations, that he was induced to pay him a visit, and found him, as usual, seated at his wheel. The gentleman who had mentioned Mr. Berry's name to the Duke accompanied him on his visit. This person, without introducing the Duke, shewed Mr. Berry the impression of a seal which the Duchess Dowager had got cut a good many years before, by a Jew in London, now dead, and which had been shewn to others as a pattern, asking him if he would cut a seal the same as that. After examining it a little, Mr. Berry answered him readily that he would. The Duke, at once pleased and astonished, exclaimed, "Will you, indeed?" Mr. Berry, who thought that this question doubt of his ability to perform what he undertook, was a little piqued, and turning round to the Duke, whom he had never before seen, he said, "Yes, sir; if I do not make a better seal than this, I will charge no payment for it." The Duke, highly pleased, left the pattern with Mr. Berry, and went away. The original contained, indeed, the various devices of the thirty-two compartments distinctly enough to be seen; but none of the colours were expressed. Mr. Berry, in proper time, finished the seal, on which the figures were not only done with superior elegance, but the colours of every part so distinctly marked, that a painter could delineate the whole, or a herald blazon it, with perfect accuracy. For this extraordinary and most ingenious labour, he charged no more than thirty-two guineas, though the pattern seal had cost seventy-five. Thus it was, that, though possessed of talents unequalled in their kind, at least in Britain, and assiduity not to be surpassed,—observing, at the same time, the strictest economy in his domestic arrangements,—Mr. Berry died at last, in circumstances far from affluent, June 3, 1783, in the fifty-third year of his age, leaving a numerous family of children. It had been the lot of this ingenious man to toil unceasingly for a whole life, without obtaining any other reward than the common boon of mere subsistence, while his abilities, in another sphere, or in an age more qualified to appreciate and employ them, might have enabled him to attain at once to fame and fortune in a very few years. His art, it may be remarked, has made no particular progress in Scotland, in consequence of his example. The genius of Berry was solitary, both in respect of place and time, and has never been rivalled by any other of his countrymen. It must be recorded, to the honour of this unrequited genius, that his character in private life was as amiable and unassuming as his talents were great; and that his conduct on all occasions was ruled by the strictest principles of honour and integrity.—*Chambers' Scottish Biographical Dictionary.*

## BURIAL FANCIES.

"THE seventeenth stanza of the second book of the *Minstrel*," says Sir William Forbes, in his *Life of Beattie*, "in which he so feelingly describes the spot of which he most approved for his place of sepulture, is so very exact a picture of the situation of the churchyard of Lawrence-kirk, which stands near to his mother's house, and in which is the schoolhouse where he was daily taught, that he must certainly have had it in his view at the time he wrote the following beautiful lines:—

Let vanity adorn the marble tomb  
With trophies, rhymes, and scutcheons of renown,  
In the deep dungeon of some gothic dome,  
Where night and desolation ever frown:  
Mine be the breezy hill that skirts the crown,  
Where a green grassy turf is all I crave,  
With here and there a violet bestrewn,  
Past by a brook or fountain's murmuring wave,  
And many an evening sun shine sweetly on my grave!

"The wish, that our bones should be laid in the sepulchre with our fathers," has been so prevalent in all ages, that it seems to be a sentiment inherent in our nature. No wonder, therefore, that the local scenery, where his nearest and dearest connexions were interred, should have made an early and deep impression on the mind of young Beattie, and should have suggested to him the idea, that there, perhaps, might be his own place of sepulture.

"At a later period, however, he had changed his design in that respect; and after he began to spend so much time at Peterhead, he became fond of an ancient burying ground, at six miles distant, where had originally stood the church, now in ruins, of the parish of St. Fergus, in the middle of the beautiful links of that name. This was a favourite spot of Dr. Beattie's, where he much delighted to take his walks of meditation. Combining the idea of solitude and repose with the solemn purpose to which the scene was devoted, he felt a more than common interest in that sequestered spot, and used to say to his friends, that it was there he wished his remains might be laid. With that view, the first season in which his niece, Mrs. Glennie, accompanied him to Peterhead, he carried her to visit the churchyard in the links of St. Fergus. It was the recollection of that circumstance which induced Mrs. Glennie to ask him, after the death of both his sons, where he desired to be interred? to which he replied, that he 'would wish his body to be laid beside those of his two sons, rather than beside that of the greatest monarch upon earth.' He was, accordingly, buried at Aberdeen."

The remark that the wish to be buried with our fathers is inherent in our nature, is a frequent one. Whether it is true or not, the anecdote just cited proves that the wish is not so deep rooted, but that it may be superseded before the course of human life is run. Beattie was susceptible of the romantic to a degree seldom equalled; his feelings, indeed, in this respect, bordered upon the morbid: and yet we see him changing his mind twice concerning his burial place; the first, or inherent wish, that he should be laid in the sepulchre with his fathers, having been abandoned upon a fancy that he had found a sequestered spot, where it would be rather an agreeable sort of thing to be buried: for some are so much impressed with the beauties of local scenery that they could almost wish to die for the sake of having their bones deposited in their favourite retreat.

Wilson, the American ornithologist, as his biographer informs us, "while in the enjoyment of health, had, in a conversation with a friend on the subject of death, expressed a wish to be buried in some rural spot, sacred to peace and solitude, whither the charms of nature might invite the steps of the votary of the Muses and the lover of science, and where the birds might sing over his grave. It has been matter of regret," adds this writer, "to those of his friends to whom was confided the mournful duty of ordering his funeral, that this desire had not been made known to them, otherwise it should have been piously observed."

Wilson's wish that his body should lie where the birds might sing over his grave, was a sentiment as finely conceived as any thing of the same kind to be met with in poetry; but the propriety of "piously observing" such wishes may be questioned: it would only encourage other similar fantasies—for it is nothing but a fantasy: man has done his duty to his dead brother when he has committed dust to dust,—it matters nothing where. A certain carpenter had such an idea of the dignity conferred upon man by the upright posture, that he thought the purposes of Nature ought not to be thwarted even in death. As far as regarded himself, in particular, he could not bear the idea of being laid on his back in the grave; but wanted to have a deep hole dug, and the coffin placed on end. He was quite serious and earnest on the subject;

and, though a man of no public fame, his dying wishes were certainly as binding on his surviving relatives, as if he had been a great poet, philosopher, statesman, or warrior; but the thing was palpably a whim, and was disregarded accordingly. Wilson's fancy had not such an air of absurdity about it: it took a different direction, but was not more founded on reason. Where it is a matter of indifference, there is no harm in attending to injunctions of this kind; but to say we do it from principle, that they should be "piously observed," and to act upon it, were but to delude and be deluded. The dead, disguise it as we may, are buried for the sake of the living, not because it is of any consequence to themselves; and no outrage was done to the manes of the carpenter, who was interred in a recumbent instead of a standing posture; nor to Wilson, when buried in the churchyard and not in the woods, any more than to those of Beattie, because his body was not divided among the three places, which, at different periods of his life, he had chosen for his burial ground.

Yet though, to the eye of reason, no one spot, abstractly considered, is more desirable as a place of sepulture than another, the attachment which binds us to the graves where our fathers repose is connected with some of our noblest feelings, and helps to cherish them. We cannot expect to see all mankind raised to the dignity of Stoic philosophers, nor is it certain that that state would confer more real happiness than is derived from the indulgence of prejudices, which, though numerous, are harmless, and even amiable. "Where is your earth?" is a question frequently to be heard among the Scottish peasantry; and if all the associations which such an allusion is calculated to awaken, were rooted from our bosoms, why really, after all, this would be an exceedingly uncomfortable world to live in. In this way it is often found, that those things which we are most sensible are weaknesses, contribute materially to promote that kindness of disposition, without which society were repulsive in its aspects, and unendurable in reality.

The fancy of being laid apart from the resting places of our fellow creatures, is so beautifully developed in a small poem by the late Mr. Crabbe, that we cannot resist the temptation of quoting it. It must be understood as the address of an ill-fated lady, slightly tinged with insanity, to her sister, when on her death-bed.

Let me not have this gloomy view  
About my room, around my bed;  
But morning roses, wet with dew,  
To cool my burning brows instead.  
As flowers that once on Eden grew,  
Let them their fragrant spirit shed,  
And every day the sweets renew,  
Till I, a fading flower, am dead.

Oh, let the herbs I loved to rear  
Give to my sense their perfumed breath  
Let them be placed about my bier,  
And grace the gloomy hour of death.  
I'll have my grave beneath a hill,  
Where only Lucy's self shall know,  
Where runs the pure pellucid rill  
Upon its gravely bed below;  
There violets on the borders blow,  
And insects their soft light display,  
Till, as the morning sunbeams glow,  
Their cold phosphoric fires decay.

That is the grave to Lucy shewn,  
The soil a pure and silver sand,  
The green cold moss above it grown,  
Unplucked of all but maiden hand.  
In virgin earth till then untarn'd,  
Then let my maiden form be laid;  
Nor let my changed clay be spurn'd,  
Nor for new guests that bed be made.

There will the lark—the lamb in sport,  
In air—on earth—securely play,  
And Lucy to my grave resort,  
As innocent, but not so gay.  
I will not have the churchyard ground,  
With bones all black and ugly grown,  
To press my shiv'ring body round,  
Or on my wasted limbs be thrown.

With ribs and skulls I will not sleep,  
In darkening beds of cold blue clay,  
Through which the ringed earthworms creep,  
And on the shrouded bosom prey;  
I will not hear the bell proclaim  
When those sad marriage rites begin;  
And boys, without regard and shame,  
Press the vile mouldering masses in.

Say not it is beneath my care,  
I cannot those cold truths allow:  
These thoughts may not afflict me there,  
But, oh, they vex and tease me now.  
Raise not a turf, nor set a stone,  
That man a maiden's grave may trace,  
But let my Lucy come alone,  
And let affection find the place.

Oh, take me from a world I hate!  
Men, cruel, selfish, sensual, cold;  
And in some pure and blessed state,  
Let me my sister minds behold:  
From gross and sordid views refined,  
Our heaven of spotless love to share,  
For only generous souls design'd,  
And not a man to meet us there.



## THE SEA SHORES OF BRITAIN.

ONE of the most remarkable, and yet, perhaps, less regarded phenomena in nature, is the incessant change which is going on in the configuration and dimensions of the sea-shores of this and the adjacent continental countries. So fierce and unceasing is the action of the tides and current of the ocean, especially if affected by the influx of rapid streams, that in few parts of the coast do we find that outline and appearance which our ancestors beheld some hundreds of years since. Where there were once bare rocks, or bleak sand and morasses, we may find beautiful extensive meadows of alluvial soil; and, where the fields once bloomed in perennial beauty, we may behold nothing but huge stones, garnished with marine herbs, and forming the habitation of innumerable shell fish.

The extraordinary changes of this nature daily in action, are not observable in detail; but, after the interval of years, they can easily be distinguished. It is probably not generally known, that the island of Great Britain is melting away, like a mass of ice affected by the warming rays of the sun. Every hour it is becoming less in weight or bulk than it was the hour preceding—every day many hundreds of tons of matter are washed from its declivities, and carried by rivers and floods into the bed of the ocean. The result of so extensive a diminution is no where so observable as in the sea betwixt our island and Holland. Here the ocean is discovered to be fast filling up. It is now full of large banks, extending to a great length, the most extensive being the Dogger Bank, which stretches upwards of three hundred and fifty-four miles from west to south. The mountains rising beneath the waves of the sea are composed of matter chiefly drifted from the land; and as they will in time elevate their summits above the surface of the water, they will next begin to be covered with vegetation; and the period may arrive when there will exist a country as large as our own, though certainly flat in its character, and which will afford a home and support to a nation as powerful as those of elder creation. It is calculated that the banks we speak of would cover Great Britain to the depth of twenty-eight feet, were they scattered evenly on the ground; and this alone may give us an idea of the loss which our country has sustained. Our hills and valleys everywhere exhibit traces of the devastations which torrents and impetuous rivers have accomplished: every rivulet in our mountains exhibits, by their excavated banks, that large portions of the soil have been irreversibly lost, or been floated off to form the base-work of new countries not yet emerged from their watery bed.

It is a subject fruitful in interest to the reflective, the great change that must have been thus effected in the character of our dearly beloved island throughout the succession of past ages. On the close examination of facts and appearances, we have the strongest circumstantial evidence that Great Britain was by no means originally an island, but formed merely a prolongation to the north of the continent of Europe. "Whether England," says Lyell, in his *Principles of Geology*, "was formerly united with France, has often been a favourite speculation; and in 1753, a society at Amiens proposed this as the subject of a prize essay, which was gained by the celebrated Desmarest, then a young man. He founded his principal arguments on the identity of composition of the cliffs on the opposite sides of the channel; on a submarine chain, extending from Boulogne to Folkestone, only fourteen feet under low water; and on the identity of the noxious animals in England and France, which could not have swum across the straits, and would never have been introduced by man. He also attributed the rupture of the isthmus to the preponderating violence of the current from the north. It will hardly be disputed, that the ocean might have effected a breach through the land which, in all probability once united our country to the continent, in the same manner as it now gradually forces a passage through the rocks of the same mineral composition, and often many hundred feet high, upon our coast. Although the time required for such an operation was probably very great, yet we cannot estimate it by reference to the present rate of waste on both sides of the channel. For when, in the thirteenth century, the sea burst through the isthmus of Staveren, which formerly united Friesland with North Holland, it opened, in about one hundred years, a strait more than half as wide as that which divides England from France; after which the dimensions of the new channel remained almost stationary. The greatest depth of the straits between Dover and Calais is twenty-nine fathoms, which only exceeds, by one fathom, the greatest depth of the Mississippi at New Orleans." The speculative philosopher might perhaps deduce, from this ingenious theory, that, at some early period in the history of the world, our island was thus providentially cut off from France, in order that it might, at some future day, be inhabited by a people peculiar in their habits, and calculated to offer an example for the conduct of neighbouring nations.

With respect to the formation of alluvial land, there can be no doubt that it takes place almost entirely from the deposit of muddy particles brought from the interior by rivers, and prevented from going out to sea by the action of currents and tides. Thus, Holland and the adjacent low countries are supposed to be formed by the flux of earthy matter from the Rhine and other large rivers. At the mouth of the Thames, there are various examples of the gain and loss of land. On the south shore of the Firth of Forth, there are some places where land is in the course of being saved from the sea to a great extent, particularly near Bo'ness; and there are other places—for instance, betwixt Leith and Newhaven—where the loss has been very great, though not of such importance as to rouse the people to a just sense of the injury. The Carse of Falkirk has, in the same way, been formed of alluvial matter; and the Carse of Gowrie and Strathra exhibit every appearance of being of the same consistence. The Tay and the Earn are two of the largest Scottish rivers, both disemboguing

into an estuary called the Firth of Tay. It is apparent that these beautiful streams do not flow in the channel which they once pursued.

The traditions of the country people, although always suspicious, are generally worthy of some credit, especially when local appearances give them countenance. It is a common tradition, that the Tay, instead of forming the southern boundary of the Carse of Gowrie, formerly bounded it on the north, running under the Sidlaw Hills. The usual tale is, that the Tay turned off from its present course about two miles below Perth, and making the circuit described, fell into the Firth, at the eastern extremity of the Carse; the Earn occupying by itself the channel of the two (now) united rivers. They ran along all the way down the Carse, parallel to, and at no great distance from, each other, winding round, and almost isolating various rising grounds which lay between them, and which, from this circumstance, were called *Inches*, or islands, as Inch or Meginch, Inchmartin, Inchmichael, Inchture, and others. A countryman, having drawn a furrow with his plough from the Tay along a low field which he wished to irrigate, caused the whole river to take this direct and to flow into the course of the Earn, leaving its former channel here, and taking away from the Inches their pristine insular character. Another result has been, that the Tay now appears to flow into the Earn as a tributary, instead of sustaining its real character as a principal. Wild and improbable as this story may appear, it is borne partly out by local facts. It is the opinion of the present writers, that the whole of that district or country, or space forming the beds of the Tay and Earn, with the carses on their banks, from that part of the Tay where it becomes shallow, a few miles above Dundee, to the eminences which bound the Carse of Strathra on the west, was, at an early period, one immense lagoon, or jungle, such as is now seen on the continent of America, wherein was a trackless labyrinth of watercourses, pools, brushwoods, and forest trees. How or when the aboriginal forest disappeared, or the waters of the swamp betook themselves to defined channels, are questions which no writer can answer. It is only a matter of certainty that the country continued in a condition far from reclaimed after the land became inhabited, because the etymologies of the names of places now in use, are significant of the original nature of their respective localities. By these names we further discover that the district was the habitation of beasts of prey and animals of the chase. Boars, wolves, and foxes, from such a deduction, must have been the common inhabitants of the thickets and wilds. It has been shewn by the ingenious naturalist, the Rev. Dr. Fleming of Flisk, that what is now the bed of the Tay was once a forest, and this is proved by the discovery of the roots of trees, still in their natural position, within low water mark; immense beds of clay full of the leaves of fresh-water plants; also beds of peat, containing hazel nuts in great quantities; deposits of shell marl, and other remains equally significant. The process of forming dry arable land, out of the sludge of a shallow river, easily diverted from its course, has been pursued, first by Nature, and in the second place, by Art. The cause of the windings or links of the Forth, may be referred to a something so trifling that it is hardly worthy of belief. The fall of a tree has sent a stream in a new direction; the slight opposition offered by the edge of a stone, has directed the water into an opposite course. On a smaller scale, the whole operation may be seen in the case of a rivulet meandering through the bottom of a meadow. The growth of the land is likewise of no difficult solution. The grounds of the carse are the deposition of particles of earthy matter, washed down by the floods from the upper country, mingled with the residuum of forest trees and decayed vegetables. It is interesting to view the spectacle of the reclaiming of land from the Tay, now in operation, at the instance of both nature and art. This large and fine river is constantly bringing down from the recesses of the Highlands an infinitude of particles of sand or other matter, individually so small, that they cannot be seen by the naked eye, and whose presence is only known by the colour they infuse in the water. These particles are not carried out to sea. They are arrested by the tides opposite the carse ground above noticed, and, sinking to the bottom, they imperceptibly form a fine species of mire. In the course of time, this mire rises to the surface of the estuary. It is first left dry at ordinary high tides, and next becomes visible at the height of spring tides. For a very long while, it forms merely long bare reaches at low water, and at these ebbs of the tide, a person might, from appearances, be of opinion, that he could walk across the bed of the estuary with little difficulty. Floods and high impetuous tides at last drift so much matter on these rising reaches and half-formed islets, that they remain, at all times, above water, and finally, by the action of the winds blowing thither the seeds of plants, or by other causes beyond the reach of human discovery, the land so formed is covered with a rich herbage, shrubs, plants of various nature, and even trees. In the bed of the Tay there have risen, in this manner, Grange Island, Rhind Island, Cairney Islands, Carpow Island, Chishinny Island, and Mugdrum Island, and perhaps these islands may at a future day be joined to each other, or to the mainland on one side, so as to offer a complete specimen, in modern times, of the way in which the great body of the carses have sprung into existence. The ingenuity and wisdom of man are hastening, though not with a very creditable rapidity, the extension of the dry land on the banks of the Tay, and gradually diminishing the unprofitable breadth of its channel. The work of creation is going on chiefly upon Fife side, a short way below Newburgh. Rude piers or dikes are run out from the shore, to the length of a few yards, at certain distances from each other, and at every flux of the tide, a small portion of the mire is left betwixt them. Little by little, the margin of the land is protruded farther and farther into the water, and when it has reached the outer termination of the dykes, ad-

ditional projections are made, and the same result follows of an increase of land. In this way many flat fertile fields have been added to this portion of Fife; and, judging from a superficial calculation, it would seem to be no difficult matter to hem in the Tay to a narrow deep channel on the Perthshire side, thereby not only increasing the quantity of productive land to a vast amount, but doing much for the benefit of navigation.

## THE SCOTTISH DUKES.

ARGYLE.

THE first of this family was a gentleman of Anglo-Norman lineage, designated Gillespie (or Archibald,) Campbell, who, in the eleventh or twelfth century, married the heiress of an old Celtic race of heroes, who had possessed the barony of Lochow, in Argyleshire, if we are to believe the sennachies, from the year 404. Sir Neil Campbell of Lochow, seventh in descent from Gillespie, was a notable adherent of King Robert Bruce, through all his various fortunes; he married the sister of that monarch, and was endowed by him with a great quantity of lands, forfeited by the adherents of Baliol. The estates of the family, from this period, increased very fast, inasmuch that Sir Duncan, the fourth in descent from Neil, on becoming a hostage for the ransom of James I. in 1424, was found to be worth 1500 men a-year. This great baron was made a Lord of Parliament in 1445, under the title of Lord Campbell. Colin, his grandson, added immensely to his territories, by marrying one of the three heiresses of Lorn; and, in 1457, was elevated to the rank of Earl of Argyle. The family had no political importance till the great division of opinion at the Reformation. It then obtained distinction by embracing the Protestant side. Archibald, the fourth earl, was the very first of the Scottish nobility who did so: and it is remarkable, that so long as there was the least dispute between the principles of protestantism and popery, or liberal and anti-liberal politics, the weight of this great territorial house was uniformly thrown into the former scale. The family of Argyle thus bears a conspicuous part in Scottish history, from the Reformation downward. It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader, that in the covenanting movement in Scotland, Archibald, the eighth earl, was, almost from the beginning, in 1637, to the end, in 1651, the dominant spirit. It is related of this nobleman, that he never travelled without a Bible and Concordance. Charles I. in his absurd endeavours to pacify the Scots, created their favorite, Argyle, a marquis. He was, however, like all the rest of his countrymen, a royalist, and as such, exerted himself in favour of Charles II, who was admitted to a limited, or rather nominal, sovereignty in Scotland long before the Restoration. After that event, Argyle was beheaded for his cruelties to the ultra-royalists, and his acceptance of place under Cromwell. His son, Archibald, styled ninth earl, was the eminent patriot so highly eulogized by Fox. He was beheaded in the reign of James II., after an unsuccessful attempt at an insurrection. The family estates, forfeited on this occasion, were restored after the revolution, to Archibald, the tenth earl, son of the last unfortunate nobleman, who made a conspicuous figure under the liberalized reign of King William, and was raised to a dukedom by that monarch in 1701. Though a clever man, he was too dissipated to be a great statesman: it was alleged, by the scandal of the time, that he dived from a wound received in a brothel. This event took place in 1703, when his son, Duke John, succeeded. This amiable and most accomplished nobleman, who, according to Pope, was

—the state's whole thunder born to wield,  
And shake alike the senate and the field,

performed to the government of George I. the eminent service of suppressing the insurrection of 1715; which he did with an amazingly small force, and only by the exertion of the most consummate prudence. Archibald, the brother and successor of Duke John, was the confidant of Walpole, and his chief adviser in Scottish affairs. The family, since that period, has only been distinguished as a great territorial house, on the liberal side of the question. The present duke, who is a Whig, is understood, however, to have greatly reduced the estates collected through so many ages.

## POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS.

SPECKS ON THE FINGER NAILS.

"I myself," says Milton, in a treatise called *The Figures*, "have known many old women who hold, that, if the nails of the hand grow yellow, it is a great sign of ill luck, and that specks are the true signs of ill luck." The reverse is at this day augured, in Scotland, from the appearance of white specks on the finger nails: they are called "gifts;" and it is said to the person who has them, that he may shortly expect presents, greater or smaller, fewer or more numerous, according to their size and quantity.

ORIGIN OF THE CUSTOM OF WATCHING THE DEAD.

If a corpse were left in a house with the door ajar, it was supposed to be at the hazard of its being carried off by malevolent spirits. The spiritual part being separated from the corporeal, and the latter no longer hallowed by the blessing pronounced at baptism, it was supposed to be incapable of invoking the aid of higher powers, and was therefore exposed to the machinations of the imps of darkness, unless carefully watched and guarded by the living. The custom, once established, continues, though people are no longer under the influence of the superstition from which it originated.

ACHES AND CORNS.

There is nothing superstitious in the prognostications of weather from aches and corns, for "aches and corns," says the great philosopher Bacon, "do engrave (i. e. afflict)

either towards rain or frost. The one makes the humour to abound more, and the other makes them sharper."

## HOUSE LEAK.

It is common, in the north of England, to plant the herbious leek upon the tops of cottage houses. The learned author of the *Vulgar Errors* informs us, that it was an ancient superstition; and this herb was planted on the tops of houses as a defence against lightning and thunder.

## WEATHERCOCKS.

Vanes on the tops of steeples were anciently in the form of a cock, (called from hence weathercocks,) and put up, in papal times, to remind the clergy of watchfulness. "In summitate crucis, quæ campanario vulgo impositur, galli gallinæ effigies solet figura, quæ Ecclesiarum Rectores Vigilantiam admonet."

## SWALLOWS.

It is accounted unlucky to destroy swallows: this is probably a Pagan relic. We read, in *Ælion*, that these birds were sacred to the Penates, or household gods of the ancients, and therefore were preserved. They were honoured anciently as the nuncios of the spring. The Rhodians are said to have had a solemn anniversary song to welcome the swallow. Anacreon addressed his tenth ode to this bird; of which the following is the elegant translation by Mr. Moore:—

Tell me how to punish thee  
For the mischief done to me?  
Silly swallow! prating thing,  
Shall I clip that wheezing wing,  
Or as Tereus did of old,  
(So the fabled tale is told.)  
Shall I tear that tongue away—  
Tongue that utter'd such a lay?  
How unthinking hast thou been!  
Long before the dawn was seen,  
When I slumber'd in a dream,  
(Love was the delicious theme!)  
Just when I was nearly blest,  
Ah! thy matin broke my rest.

## ROSEMARY USED AT FUNERALS.

Rosemary, as are all evergreens, is an emblem of the soul's immortality. It is as much as to say, that though the body be dead, yet the soul is ever green, and always in life. It is not like the body, and those other greens, which die and revive again at their proper seasons. No autumn nor winter can make any change in it: but it is unalterably the same, perpetually in life, and never dying.

## ROBIN REDBREAST.

Mr. Addison supposes the popular ballad of the "Babes in the Wood" to have preserved the lives of many Robin Redbreasts. The subsequent stanza places them in a very favourable point of view:—

No burial this pretty pair  
Of any man received,  
Till Robin Redbreast, painfully,  
Did cover them with leaves.

## SPITTING.

Spitting, according to Pliny, was superstitiously observed in averting witchcraft, and in giving a shrewder blow to an enemy. Hence seems to be derived the custom our bruisers have of spitting in their hands before they begin their unmanly barbarity. Several other vestiges of the superstition relative to fasting spittle, (*Fasci nationes saliva jejuna repellere, veteri superstitione creditum est.* Alex. ab Alex.) mentioned also in Pliny, may yet be traced among our vulgar. Boys have a custom (*interse*) of spitting their faith, when required to make asseverations in a matter of consequence. In combinations of colliers, &c. in the north, for the purpose of raising their wages, they are said to spit upon a stone together, by way of cementing their confederacy. We have, too, a kind of popular saying, when persons are of the same party, or agree in sentiments, "they spit upon the same stone."

## THE RING FINGER.

The particular regard to this finger is of high antiquity. It hath been honoured with the golden token and pledge of matrimony, preferable to any other finger, not, as *Levinus Lemnius*, in his "Occult Miracles of Nature," tells us, because there is a nerve \* as some have thought, but because a small artery runs from the heart to this finger, the motion of which, in portioners, women, &c., may be perceived by the touch of the finger index.

## FORESPEAKING.

To gaze steadily into a dark house or room, or out upon a dark night, when we know that nothing can be seen, is dangerous; for, according to the superstitious, evil spirits often take the opportunity of presenting themselves at these times, in order that we may not look in vain. When the whole creation is hid from our view, they apprehend that they have a right to shew themselves. It is also unsafe to look over one's shoulder in the night time, either from fear, or any other cause. In the first case, we are expressly looking for objects of dread, and it is no wonder they appear to us. On the same principle, imprecations are, above all things, to be

\* Mr. Wicely tells us, that the rabrick of "Salsbury Manus" has these words: "It is because from hence there proceeds a particular vein to the heart." "This, indeed," he adds, "is now contradicted by experience, but several eminent authors, as well Gentiles as Christians, as well physicians as divines, were formerly of this opinion, and, therefore, they thought this finger the properest to bear the pledge of love; that from thence it might be conveyed, as it were, to the heart." This opinion has been exploded by later physicians; but it was from hence that antiquity judged it worthy, and selected it to be adorned with a circlet of gold. They called it also the medical finger, and were so superstitious as to mix up their medicines and potions with it.

avoided, for demons are extremely attentive, and will come for the least hint. "Speak of the devil," says the proverb, "and he'll appear." The same evil geni, though they do not start up in person, are ever ready to hasten calamities; and if a man be of a querulous temper, and give vent to his seelvishness in the anticipation of approaching misfortunes, they will visit him—he has foreseen them. In this point, superstition was made to supply the want of reflection, teaching men not to distrust the goodness of Providence, but to live quiet-minded, without the dread of future disaster. They had the maxim; and, perhaps, it often kept them right, though they were unable to appreciate the true spirit of it. It is thus, that if we could trace many superstitions to their sources, we shall see them to have been deduced from very excellent rules of morality. Sometimes, also, they are connected with circumstances that may be accounted for from very sufficient natural causes, as in the following well known instance:—

## RATS.

If a house is haunted by rats, it is accounted a presumption, that good fortune will attend the inmates, and that when the rats desert them, they will be exposed to want. This is nothing more than an *ex post facto* prophecy; for no rat will take up its abode where it does not find plenty to prey upon; and they will take their departure when they find provisions growing scarce. The same animals are believed to fly from a house about to fail, which may be true, because, having their roads and dwellings about the foundations of buildings, they may be apprized of the approaching catastrophe, by feeling them give way, or perceiving crevices forming in the seats of walls. When, without reference to the reasons for them, these things came to be matter of belief in regard to a house, it was easy and natural to predicate the same thing concerning a ship; and, accordingly, instances have been known where sailors could not be procured to man a merchantman, when a rumour had gone abroad that the rats had abandoned her, that being considered a sure preage that she would be wrecked on the voyage. Many people forbear to use any means of destroying rats, believing that good luck would be banished along with them; whereas, if in place of considering the superstition to be abstractly true, they were to look to the facts it is founded upon, they would perceive the difference between an enemy flying from famine, and being driven back from abundant supplies.

## ACCOUNT OF THE LADY WHO NURSED GEORGE IV.

PREVIOUS to the year 1745, the Earl of Glencairn was governor of Dumbarton Castle. His countess was sister or cousin of Murray of Broughton, superior of the parish of Anwoth in Galloway. At this time the schoolmaster of Anwoth was Mr. Andrew Waddel, A.M. (afterwards well known as the translator of Buchanan's Psalms), who, being a very learned man, was recommended by Broughton to Lord Glencairn, as tutor to his sons. In this way Mr. Waddel was translated from Anwoth to Dumbarton Castle. During Mr. Waddel's residence with this noble family, a soldier in the garrison, called Sutherland, died. His death was very soon followed by that of his wife; and they left a son and daughter totally destitute. The boy, William, entered the army; and Mr. Waddel, who was no less remarkable for his humanity than his learning, though encumbered with a large family of his own, and having very slender means, adopted the soldier's daughter.

The little Margaret Sutherland, as she grew up, became a paragon of beauty, and was no less admired for the gracefulness of her appearance than she was beloved for her amiable dispositions. Such attractions were too well calculated to excite stronger feelings than those of mere admiration. Though no less virtuous than beautiful, this innocent creature became the victim of unlawful passions. A Captain Scott of the artillery betrayed her unsuspecting confidence, and clandestinely carried her off from under the care of her venerable protector. It may easily be conceived that the good old man was plunged into the deepest distress by this unprincipled act. For three long years, notwithstanding the most diligent and unceasing inquiries, he heard nothing of his much loved protégée. At last a letter came, addressed to him in characters, which he himself had taught her to trace. The contents were most consolatory. The sweet girl, whose heart revolved at the idea of living with Captain Scott on the terms he proposed, had, with a degree of spirit for which he was not prepared, insisted on returning to the bosom of the family of her excellent friend in Scotland, from whom she never once doubted, even under such circumstances, of meeting with the most cordial reception. The Captain found that to part with her was worse than death; and at last adopted the virtuous resolution of affording her the only adequate reparation in his power, by making her his lawful wife, which he had now done.

We here come to the most interesting part of our story. When it became necessary to find a nurse for the infant Prince of Wales, the now happy and respectable Mrs. Captain Scott, (who had by this time increased her family) was suggested, and accepted; and she had the distinguished honour of suckling our present most gracious Sovereign. The person from whom we have derived our information is the grandson of Mr. Waddel. He is himself an old soldier, and saw Mrs. Scott in London about twelve years ago. At this time she was old and infirm, but still retained traces of her former beauty. In her elevation she did not forget her brother, who, having returned disabled from the wars, enjoyed, through her interest, a small pension.—*Edinburgh Literary Journal*.

## ABERDEEN JOKES.

The following *facetie Aberdeenensis* we extract from the last number of the Aberdeen Magazine:—"A venerable Aberdeen baillie, long, long ago called to his fathers, had once, on a most extraordinary occasion, to travel all the way to that great city, London. He was informed, before his departure, by an economical friend, that the cheapest way of living in London was to dine at a coffee-room. This practice he accordingly adopted. Seated in a coffee-room one forenoon, very hungry, he could by no means name to the waiters any dish which there was a possibility of procuring. At length, hearing a gentleman call for coffee, he vociferated, "I'm sayin', waiter, I'll hae coffee, tee." "Coffee tea, Sir," said the waiter; "sorry we've no beverage called at ere in the house." "Lord sake, min," said the baillie, "canna ye gee's coffee, the thing the tither chap's gettin'?" "Oh, yes, Sir; bring you a cup of coffee." But when the coffee was produced, our townsman liked not the three miserable slices of toast which accompanied it; so, having crunched them all up, he vociferated, "I'm sayin', waiter, I'll hae nae mair o' them wafers, ye maun bring me a shave o' loaf at aunc." "Yes, sir, immediately." But the waiter was not so good as his word; for, returning, he stated, "We've sent and searched every bake house in the street, Sir, and can't find no such thing as a shave o' loaf among 'em all." Now this was truly perplexing, and our townsman had still to rack his ingenuity for his dinner. At length a lucky thought struck him. He saw some pigeons perched on a chimney close by, and he would have a "doo tert;" but what this meant all the learned men in the coffee-room could not discover, and he was at last enabled, by means of a series of signs, to make known that he wished a "pigeon pie."

## WEST INDIAN VIPER.

The great viper, called *fer de lance*, is one of the most dreadful scourges in the West Indies, but is found only in Martinique, St. Lucia, and another small island. This viper is so savage that the moment it sees any person, it immediately erects itself and springs upon him. In raising itself, it rests upon four equal circles, formed by the lower part of the body; when it springs, these circles are suddenly dissolved. After the spring, if it should miss its object, it may be attacked with advantage; but this requires considerable courage, for as soon as it can erect itself again, the assailant runs the greatest risk of being bitten. Often, too, it is so bold as to follow its enemy by leaps and bounds, instead of fleeing upon him; and it does not cease the pursuit till its revenge is glutted. A. M. Morreau de Jonnes was once riding through a wood; his horse reared; on looking round to discover the cause of the animal's terror, he discovered a *fer de lance* standing erect in a bush of bamboo, and heard it hiss several times. He would have fired at it with his pistol, but the affrighted horse drew back so ungenerously, that he was obliged to look back for somebody to hold him. He now espied at some distance a negro upon the ground, wallowing in his blood, and cutting with a blunt knife the flesh from the wound occasioned by the bite of the same viper. When Mr. Jonnes acquainted him with his intention of killing the serpent, he earnestly opposed it, as he wished to take it alive, and make use of it for his cure, according to the superstitious notions of the negroes. He presently rose, cut some leaves, made a snare with them, and then, concealing himself behind a bush near the viper, he attracted his attention by a low whistling noise, and suddenly throwing a noose over the animal, drew it tight, and secured his enemy. M. Morreau saw this negro twelve months afterwards, but he had not perfectly recovered the use of the bitten limbs. The negroes persecute these vipers with the greatest acrimony. When they have killed one, they cut off its head and bury it deep in the earth, that no mischief may be done by the fangs, which are dangerous even after the death of the animal. Men and beasts shun this formidable reptile; the manifest the same antipathy towards it as they do to hawks and owls in Europe, and a small one of the *loria* kind even gives warning, by its cry, that a viper is at hand.

## WILLIAM PITT.

"He retained such an inclination for the classics, even amid the bustle of politics, in after-life, that he was seldom without having a Virgil or a Horace, or a Demosthenes at hand. He had been rather addicted, from his boyhood, to poetry, having, before he quitted home, been concerned, with his brothers and sisters, in composing a play in rhyme, which they afterwards performed before their parents and a few friends. At college he wrote a tragedy, which, while he was at the head of public affairs, he calmly consigned to the flames, in the presence of a friend, who had just read and warmly admired it."—*Georgian Era*, Vol. 1.

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